

Sitka National Historical Park Archaeological Survey Project

Newsletter 2



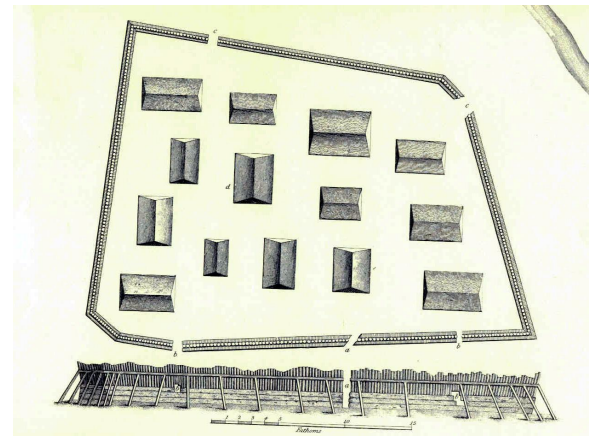
December 1, 2005

The archaeological survey begun at the park this past summer concluded its first field season in August. Since that time the Midwest Archeological Center's archeologists have focused on cataloging and stabilizing collected materials and preparing for next summer's field season. They recently posted a sample of project photographs on their website www.cr.nps.gov/mwac (click on "2005 Field Season: project photographs").

One of the most interesting aspects of this project is the potential for locating evidence of the unique *Kiks.ádi* fort that was at the center of the 1804 battle. Our knowledge of the fort, known to the Tlingit as *Shis'k'iNoow*, is preserved in Tlingit oral history and written historical sources. One of these is the narrative of Urey Lisiansky, Captain of the *Neva*, one of the Russian ships involved in the battle of 1804 (see drawing). According to Lisiansky: "The fort was an irregular square, its longest side looking toward the sea. It was constructed of wood, so thick and strong, that the shot from my guns could not penetrate it at the short distance of a cable's length."

A very preliminary look at the initial geophysical survey data for the fort site area has revealed a number of "anomalies" (areas that are distinct in some way from the surrounding

sediments) but none clearly point to the expected outline of the fort. The anomalies could also represent past site disturbances, ranging from Russian homesteading to more recent landscaping.



Shis'k'iNoow as recorded by Lisiansky with detail showing the construction of the log walls.

As a result of the survey project, Sitka National Historical Park has had an increase in requests for public programs about archeology. One request grew into an archeology-themed unit for over 100 Sitka 6th graders that involved visits to the park to learn about the battle and a mock excavation in the student's classrooms and other hands-on activities.

More details will become available as the project continues. Newsletters will resume next summer.

For More Information: For information about this newsletter contact Kristen Griffin at (907)747-0132 or kristen_griffin@nps.gov. For information about the project, contact Bill Hunt at bill_hunt@nps.gov or Gene Griffin at (907)747-0140 or gene_griffin@nps.gov. For more information about Sitka National Historical Park, contact the park at (907)747-0110 or visit the park webpage at www.nps.gov/sitk